Critical Theory and Welsh School of Security Studies

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Traditional vs. Critical Theory

Traditional Theory

Critical Theory

Explain and control certain phenomena

Explain certain phenomena from systemic perspective

Value-neutral

State a clear social goal

In IR: Problem-Solving vs. Critical Theories (Robert Cox, 1981)

Propose a practical solution

Critical Theory: Assumptions

Social actors are rational and capable to transform their environment

The social world primarily consists of socioeconomic structures, which are legitimized by dominant ideology

These structures are objective (researcher-independent)

Key questions What are these structures? How can these be removed?

Critical Theory

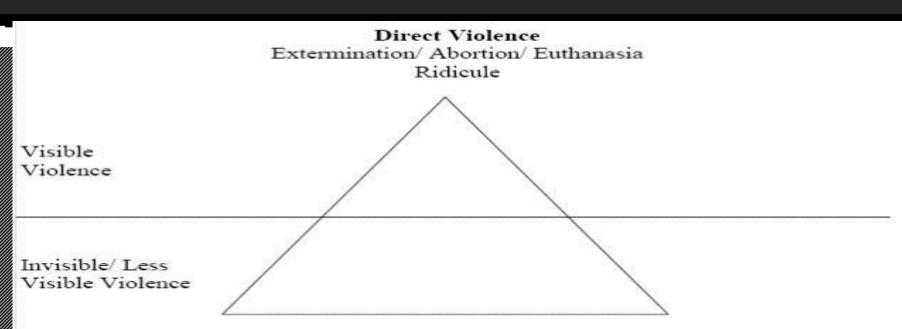
- General formula (Spegele 2002): I study international relations to emancipate [X] from structure or condition [Y] in order to achieve [Z]
- E.g.: I study IR to emancipate workers in sweatshops [X] from exploitative work
 conditions [Y] in order to achieve more just society [Z]

Let's watch something =)

Deadly fashion https://wimeo.com/143868534

Niger delta: http://weroniquedeviquerie.com/project/the-oil-war-niger-delta/#gallery/1940/441

Galtung's Triangle of Violence



Cultural Violence

- Fear
- Hatred
- Dismissiveness
- Negative Perceptions regarding abilities
- Pity

Structural Violence

- Unequal access to opportunities/ services (Education, Health, Employment)
- Inaccessible built environment
- Poverty
- Institutionalisation/ Hiding away by families

Figure 1. Disability and the triangle of violence (adapted from Johan Galtung, 1990)

Critical Security Studies (CSS) Welsh School

K. Booth R. Jones

A. Linklater

Broadening
Inclusion of non-military issues

Deepening

Both philosophical and political assumptions → Instrumental use of security (no substantive definition)

4 dimensions of CSS (Jones, 1990)

Extending

Inclusion of non-state actors (especially human beings)

Focusing
A clear normative objective (which one?)

Dimensions of CSS

Brosdening

"Military questions will obviously continue to have an important part in the concerns of all students of international politics. However, it is doubtful whether they will be as central a preoccupation, except for some obvious regional conflicts. This is because the institution of inter-state war is in historic decline." (Booth, 1991:316).

Extending

Those entities called states are obviously important features of world politics but they are unreliable, illogical and too diverse in their character to use as the primary referent objects for a comprehensive theory of security? (Booth 1991-320).

Methodological Individualism

Security vs. Emancipation

discuss the following questions:

What is security?

What is emancipation?

Are these concepts somehow related?

Focusing: Security as Emancipation

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Security (Booth 1991: 319); "the absence of threats"

Emancipation (Booth 1991, 319), "the freeing of people from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do."

It calls for action => transformational potential



Emancipatory Realism

"We can begin or continue pursuing emancipation in what we research, in how we teach, in what we put on conference agendas, in how much we support Greenpeace, Amnesty International, Oxfam and other groups and in how we deal with each other and with students.

in pursuing emancipation, the bases of real security are being established."
(Booth 1991: 326)